

Pest of the Month – Mosquitoes

Irritating, annoying and dangerous

Mosquitoes are no doubt out and about this summer. With the rains from Hurricane Dolly and Tropical Storm Edouard, puddles and pools of water are left standing. These rain storms can lead to two different waves of mosquitoes.

Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in areas that are commonly flooded. The eggs rest on the dry ground in a suspended state. Once the rain comes, the eggs start emerge from their suspended state and start their lifecycle. In the heat, it may take only 5 days from egg to adult.

Other mosquitoes are just waiting for large areas of water to lay their eggs. They remain active even in dry conditions because we provide them with standing water: ponds, water bowls, over-watering plants, etc. When larger puddles and bodies of water form from rains, this allows the females to lay eggs that have a better chance of making it to adulthood.

What we often see during rains is a burst in mosquito activity about a week after the rainstorm, and then another burst about a week or later.

In order to control mosquitoes you must find the source. Any object that can hold the slightest bit of water can harbor mosquito eggs. Look for any standing water, not just large bodies of water. Dump out standing water, refresh pet bowls, and turn over empty pots to prevent mosquito breeding sites.

If the mosquitoes aren't breeding in your backyard, there are some slightly effective repellents: cedar oil and citronella. To control adults, use sprays applied to foliage located at eye level and below with the active ingredients permethrin, malathion, resmethrin, and cyfluthrin.

Personal protection is very important because mosquitoes can carry West Nile Virus and other diseases. Use DEET or Picaradin products when spending time outdoors, and especially during dawn and dusk.

For more information about mosquitoes contact Molly Keck, Integrated Pest Management Specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension in Bexar County. mekeck@ag.tamu.edu or 210-467-6575.